



Defense Department Honors Dilks, Meyer

By Dana Finney

Kelly M. Dilks and **William D. Meyer**, ERDC-CERL, received the U.S. Department of Defense Joint Civilian Service Commendation Award for their contributions to recovery efforts for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The two were lauded for outstanding performance during volunteer assignments with Joint Task Force Katrina's Engineer Cell, based at Camp Shelby, Miss., during September 2005.

Both experts in geographic information systems (GIS), they served on a team that coordinated across multiple Army and other national agencies to provide accurate, up-to-date maps of the affected regions. Responders used the maps to guide virtually every operation on the ground: search and rescue, water levels, levee and pump status, search grids, community outreach, medical facility location, potentially hazardous sites, and forest fire potential. With the landscape changing literally by the hour, their team rotated staffing 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The award represents the highest ranking joint civilian service recognition under approval authority of the combatant commanders and heads of joint organizations. Dilks' and Meyer's citations are signed by Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honore, who led hurricane recovery operations under the U.S. Northern Command. Col. Rowan presented the awards during a recent ceremony in Champaign.

At CERL, Dilks serves as project manager for the mission-focused facility investments research team. For over one year (excluding the month in Mississippi), she also has been serving in a long-term assignment with the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management (ACSIM) at the Pentagon. In this role, she advises the ACSIM on technology solutions that could benefit U.S. Army installations and seeks partnerships for solving their unique challenges. When the technology is not available to address a specific issue, Dilks identifies qualified organizations with which ACSIM can work to develop a solution.

She joined CERL in 1992 as a graduate student to work on the then-emerging GIS technology. Dilks was part of a CERL team that developed several critical breakthroughs in this field, which jump-started the fledgling GIS industry and fueled its rapid growth.

Meyer's position at CERL is as a natural resource specialist and researcher for the Ecological Processes Branch. His work focuses on GIS analysis and research into mitigating the impact of military training on threatened and endangered species populations. He also conducts research to help restore those populations to a non-threatened status.